

that is not true. It has never ever been true. Study after study tells you what your common sense should already tell you. In fact, one study makes it very plain. On a nearly one-for-one basis, the more guns you have in your community, the more crime you are going to have.

One study said this. What they found was that for communities that saw a 1-percent increase in gun ownership—guess what they also saw. A corresponding 1-percent increase in gun homicides. Thus, it should surprise no one that as the number of guns increase in this country, the number of gun crimes increase in this country.

Now, there are a lot of reasons for that. But, again, you don't have to surge deep into the data to understand why. Let me give you just one example.

A family I am pretty close to in Hartford, CT, a young man named Shane Oliver was shot years ago right down the street from where I live in the capital city. And he was in an argument with some young men about things they said about his girlfriend, who happened to be with him. It just so happened that there was an illegal gun sitting in the front seat of one of these cars. An argument over a girl that in any other high-income nation in the world would have, at worst, resulted in some punches being thrown. In this neighborhood in Hartford, CT, it resulted in a gun homicide.

Shane Oliver doesn't live on this Earth any longer. He was taken from his parents, Pastor Sam Saylor and his wife Janet, when he was 20 years old because there was an illegal gun that just happened to be sitting in the front seat of a car. In almost any other country in the world, there is not a gun sitting in the front seat of another 20-year-old's car in the middle of Hartford, CT. Access to guns means more gun crime.

But here is the other problem. We know there has been a 40-percent increase in gun sales. But those aren't just the sales that are reported to the criminal background check system. What we know is that somewhere around 20, 30 percent of all gun sales in this country don't happen with a background check attached to it. Those are gun sales that very often are going straight to criminals and straight to gun traffickers.

So if there has been a 40-percent increase in background check transfers, there has likely also been a 40-percent increase in the number of guns that have been transferred to criminals and transferred to gun traffickers, the people who are selling them to the folks who are going to use them in gun violence.

Here is a study out of New York. The New York AG's office recently reviewed aggregate gun trace information for about 5 years, and what they found was that 74 percent of the recovered guns in New York—normally recovered because they were used in a crime—came with a known source

State that wasn't New York. That is interesting, right?

Three-quarters of the guns that are being used in crimes in New York aren't being bought in New York. There is a reason for that. You have to go through a background check in New York if you want to buy a gun. And if you are a criminal, you can't get a gun in New York at a gun store because they have background checks and because they don't have internet sales or gun show sales without background checks either.

What the AG's office also found was that half of the guns that came from outside of New York came from six States—all six States with really weak gun laws—meaning there is this very intentional iron pipeline of guns in this country coming from States with no universal background checks, places where gun traffickers can go and buy guns at gun shows or online, and then bring them to States like New York or Connecticut or New Jersey and sell them on the black market.

And what we also know is that there is a really short period of time between when these guns are being purchased and when they are being used in crimes, which shows an intentionality, which shows a very clear commercial market around the purchase of guns in places without background checks, the sale of those guns to potentially violent individuals, and the commission of crimes.

Of the 1 million crime guns that were traced in this country between 2015 and 2019, more than one-third were used in a crime within just 3 years of their initial retail sale. This short time-to-crime timeline is a strong indication that these guns were purchased with the intent to divert them for criminal use.

So every year that goes by that we choose, as a Congress, to not close these loopholes, to not simply say that if you are going to buy a gun on a commercial market in the United States, you just have to prove you are not a gun trafficker, is another year that we essentially endorse and facilitate the murder of thousands and thousands of Americans.

And there is a clear connection between this increase in gun sales and this increase in criminal activity. Why? Because along with those legal gun sales come all sorts of gun sales that do an end around on the background check system.

Now, thank goodness President Biden is doing something about this because there is a new loophole that criminals are taking advantage of, the ghost gun loophole. In California, today, 30 percent of the confiscated guns are unserialized. Think of that. Thirty percent of the guns being confiscated in California today by the ATF have no serial number on them. That is largely because of this new phenomena of ghost guns that are assembled from a kit, not guns that are purchased at a store.

In Connecticut, a convicted felon who couldn't have bought a gun at a gun store in Connecticut because he is a convicted felon used a ghost gun to shoot his girlfriend's 15-year-old daughter and 16-year-old son before turning the gun on himself. People who know they can't buy guns in gun stores or online in a place like Connecticut that has universal background checks are now assembling ghost guns and committing crimes.

The Biden administration is taking action, but so should we. I come to the floor to share this with my colleagues because our constituents are concerned about the rising rate of gun homicides in this Nation. They expect us to do something about it. And I am not saying that there is only one solution. I am not saying that changing our gun laws is the only step that we should take to try to do something about the rising rates of gun homicides in this country. There is a longer story as to why people have become so desperate as to resort to gun violence in order to mediate disputes or to project power.

But the prevalence of so many more guns in our country today than just a year ago, the prevalence of so many more illegal guns due to intentional choices made by this body is a big part of the story. And I hope that we will be able to bring before this body bipartisan legislation that will close those background check loopholes very soon to give this body a chance to do something about the rising rates of gun violence in this country.

REMEMBERING WILLIAM VANDEN HEUVEL

Mr. President, last month, the Nation lost a great patriot, and I lost a great friend, William vanden Heuvel, and I come to the floor today to honor his impressive legacy.

Bill vanden Heuvel grew up in a working-class family during the Great Depression, and his call to public service came early in his life. As a child, he listened to President Roosevelt's fireside chats, and he became obsessed with the idea that regular people can band together and build a just and compassionate country.

So upon learning of FDR's death, Bill hitchhiked alone to the Roosevelt estate to try to attend the funeral. He was 14 years old. Now, he was unsurprisingly, initially, turned away, but somehow he found his way to Eleanor Roosevelt, who was so impressed with the young man's passion for her husband's legacy that she welcomed the 14-year-old in.

In many ways, it is a story that is emblematic of Bill's life. He grew close to several prominent American leaders—from the Kennedys to Jimmy Carter—to diplomats and officials the world over—not by accident or thanks to any privilege that he was born into, but just because of his effectiveness; his tenacity; and his unbridled, infectious, contagious love for his country.

As a young attorney in the Kennedy Justice Department, Bill was given a really difficult task: help integrate

Prince Edward County, which at the time was blatantly flouting Brown v. Board of Education requirements. Robert Kennedy, then-Attorney General, personally tracked Bill's work, noticed his record of success in integrating Maryland's schools, and the two became close friends.

There was another leader, Jimmy Carter, who had asked Bill to represent America abroad as Ambassador to the European Office of the United Nations, which kicked off Bill's storied diplomatic career. His diplomatic accomplishments are too long to go through in one speech, but through his work, he became a vocal and prominent advocate for the United Nations and the work that it does to address pressing global issues.

Bill also remained committed to solving problems at home. He was a renaissance man, a true polymath, and a staunch civil rights advocate. For years, he helped lead the charge in New York City to reform its prisons. He became a crusader in the city. He tackled the squalid conditions of confinement, and he feared no one in his efforts to speak for the voiceless and make sure that even the most hardened criminals were treated like human beings. It is a big part of his legacy as well.

And in his later life, when I got to know him, he returned to his first love. Bill vanden Heuvel started and led the Franklin Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, and he championed the long fight to establish the Four Freedoms Park on Roosevelt Island. That park will stand forever as a testament to both the majesty of Franklin Roosevelt and the patriotism of Bill vanden Heuvel.

Finally, though an obituary of a great man like Bill is filled with public accomplishment, for his friends and family, it is his private accomplishment which defined his true greatness. His wife Melinda and his daughters, Katrina and Wendy, and his stepchildren, Ashley and John, know him as a kind and loving husband and father. And the literally thousands of young public servants and reformers and diplomats that he mentored over the years, they are grateful for the time he took to midwife the hopes and dreams of others.

I am one of these people. Bill took me under his wing early in my public service career. It is his advice I turned to over and over, especially in my early years in Congress, as I set my own course and picked my own battles. So, above all, Bill's family and friends will miss him dearly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

#### CHILD TAX CREDIT

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, first I want to recognize my colleague from Connecticut, his moving tribute to a great American, and also thank him for his steadfast leadership on issues of gun safety in this country.

I am standing here with my colleagues today to talk about what is

going on in this country around empowering children. We have a big thing happening tomorrow with the vast majority of families with kids across the country.

As of tomorrow, they will start seeing more money in their bank accounts every year for the rest of the year. These payments are the result of changes that we have made to the child tax credit, which was signed into law by President Biden as part of the American Rescue Plan because of the changes we advocated for.

What President Biden made law, more families and children are going to benefit from the child tax credit. More than ever before in history, in fact, this will be the greatest cut in overall child poverty in the history of America for this coming year.

So starting tomorrow, 90 percent of kids in America—90 percent of their families across the country—will start to see these payments for the rest of this year, up to \$300 for every child in a household under 6 and \$250 for every child in the household ages 6 through 17. For families in suburbs and cities and rural areas, for families across the country, this policy is transformative.

For the family of people with essential workers in Florida, the grandmother raising three children in California, a single mom in Pennsylvania working the same job for 20 years, for a parent in Utah—you can go on and on and on—this is one of the most transformative policy changes made in our Nation in more than a century.

This policy means stability. It means help is on the way. It means hope is here.

In my home State, Margarita from Passaic, NJ, who is raising three kids on her own while working two jobs, one before sunrise, starting tomorrow, she will see hundreds of dollars a month to help her pay the electric bill, help her make rent, and help her children succeed in school.

For the family of two educators with kids in New York, tomorrow is transformative. Washington State, North Dakota, blue State, so-called red State—all over this country, we are seeing a transformation.

This is what a mom from Kansas said:

[This child tax credit] would help so much for single moms like me to be able to feel secure as a parent. If at any time something were to happen to me, such as a car repair, a doctor visit, even a book fair for my children, I am just not making enough to have any extra for anything other than bills. Shoes and coats, maybe a ball glove. Karate or dance lessons to improve social skills and athletic abilities and teach children teamwork would be possible; [and] maybe even at Christmas since they didn't get one in 2020.

For middle-class families trying to stay afloat, lower income families desperate to make ends meet, and families living in poverty struggling to put food on the table, tomorrow is a new start. For millions of Americans across the country, from this body, our President, tomorrow will begin a historically unparalleled moment.

Senator BROWN, Senator BENNET, Senator WARNOCK, and I, along with our House colleagues, are going to continue to do what must be done. This change for this year—cutting child poverty, empowering millions of families, 90 percent of whom with kids will see a benefit—we must make this permanent. I will fight alongside my colleagues to see that this is not a one-time benefit for 1 year but a permanent change that we—change our status. We are the 36th wealthiest Nation on the planet, and we are 4th from the bottom in child poverty. We are second to last in terms of child allowances. We in America have to make this country live up to its promise to every child that we are the cornerstone of the idea of the American dream; that we are the most fertile soil for which a child could thrive; that we love our children not just in words but in the policies we make. This is a historic moment.

The one thing I will say to anyone listening to my words, because, as my colleague knows, some families are eligible but might not benefit, please, we need to make sure that portal—that people know to go to [childtaxcredit.gov](https://childtaxcredit.gov) to get the information. All of us have an obligation to help everyone avail themselves of this policy. I believe, God willing, we will make it permanent.

I now turn to my colleague Senator BENNET from Colorado, Mr. President, with your permission.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, we are all here today—I want to say on this floor how much I love my colleagues from New Jersey and from Ohio who are here with me today on the floor to celebrate this incredibly important milestone.

I love you for your commitment to the country and for your commitment to our kids.

I want to wish your brother well because I know that he is recovering from his stroke, and you are still taking time to be here on the floor to make sure that people who need it the most hear about this tax credit. I want to thank you for that.

I have heard the Senator from Ohio, just like the Senator from New Jersey, talk about the lives of real people in their States. I have sat in the chair where the Presiding Officer is, listening to Senator BROWN talk about families in Ashtabula or Zanesville or Dayton or Cleveland or Cincinnati or Toledo and what the policies that we pass in this body either—you know, the difference they make or very often the difference they don't make to real people at home, to the people you work for and represent in Newark.

I think about a mom, I say to my colleague from Colorado, the Presiding Officer, a mom in Rifle, CO, who was in an early childhood center there, and she was so happy to be there. The other